

Ceux qui enfrennent

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/1043915) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/1043915>.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Categories:	Gen , F/M , M/M
Fandoms:	Hannibal Lecter Series - All Media Types , Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter , Alana Bloom/Will Graham , Will Graham & his dogs , Will Graham & Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham , Jack Crawford , Alana Bloom , Hannibal Lecter , Jimmy Price , Brian Zeller , Beverly Katz , Original Characters , Freddie Lounds , Dr. Frederick Chilton
Additional Tags:	Psychoanalysis , Crime Scenes , Blood , Gore , Cannibalism , Mind Games , Mental Institutions , Hallucinations , Dark Agenda , Manipulation , POV Third Person , Blood and Gore , Attempted Murder , Mental Coercion , Mental Instability , Insanity , Canon-Typical Violence , Implied Relationships , Manipulative Hannibal , Dark Will Graham , Work In Progress
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2013-11-14 Updated: 2014-02-25 Words: 10,511 Chapters: 4/6

Ceux qui enfrennent

by [Loxchi](#)

Summary

Will Graham has finally been released from Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane, his first case already awaiting him. A serial killer with a flair for articulate puzzles made of severed limbs and explosives. Every step is set in stone, the past cannot be rewritten, and as Hannibal Lecter's motives remain the same, his obscure methods are tested in their capacity at dueling with the newly awakened Will Graham.

Notes

Ceux qui enfrennent : Those who break

I sincerely hope you all enjoy each course of this meal I bring to you.
Critique/feedback is welcome.

Prologo Insaniam

Chapter Summary

The killer has struck, the aftermath of his work spreading amongst the locals like wildfire, and Will arrives to interpret at the scene.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“You have no traceable motive...which is why you were so hard to see.” Will Graham's sentence momentarily withheld the surging anger as the pieces began clicking together.

The unperturbed echo of time serves as a reminder of that which cannot be undone.

“You have to be careful, Hannibal. They're starting to see your pattern.” Bedelia Du Maurier tentatively warned as she dined with him in the later hours.

As much as human willpower tries to unravel the myriad of life questions, reality is the proof that is unavoidable, before all, that is what remains.

Chapter 1: Prologo Insaniam

An indiscernible figure lay wrapped in the surrounding darkness, wheezing, trying to calm each stuttering breath. Fingers curled in the crusted soil, clothes dampening with spreading red. The quarrel had gone on for hours, maybe an entire day.

Choking out a cough, then another, followed by black liquid. Black in the light-lacking night. He knew it was blood.

It was all his blood.

He tilted back on his heels, his head upturned to the bleak expanse of sky, the stars shrouded by clouds, breathing deeply of the oxygen tasting of iron. The body in front of him was motionless, and in his mind he hoped that the other was just unconscious and not lost to an unreachable realm. Then he heard his name. Twice, thrice, then his eyes snapped open as he was riled from his sleep.

Focus. He required focus.

But he was distracted from activities of the night before.

Was it the night before?

He mused blandly to himself, echoes of self doubt consistently re-emerged, as any memory can be revisited and relived over and over again.

That is their worth.

His lip twitched up, trying to smile *"Let's make more memories..."* He whispered and his feet set forward into the woods, his steps light and the future boundless.

A knocking on the car window snapped him from his state of mind.

"We're here."

The words clanged in his skull as he stepped from the car and onto the ground. Leaves crunched and twigs snapped and cracked under the new weight, the slamming car door that preceded the noise roused him the rest of the way with a jolt of nerves.

-+-+--+--+--+--+--

The classroom was distilled with silence as Special Agent Will Graham seated himself at his desk, a small stack of papers awaiting his evaluation. There was an odd tremor fluctuating within him that he couldn't quite place, not dissimilar to the feeling of butterflies.

Pulling his concentration back to his responsibilities as a teacher, Will lifted the first collection of pages away from the rest. A knock at the half-open door sent his concentrated senses adrift again, and he looked that way, pages lowering in mildly apparent discontent.

"Special Agent Will Graham?" A melodic timbre broke the stillness, the voice was speaking hastily, as if the owner was hours late for a mandatory appointment. The vocals were contrasted greatly by the silhouette of a man in the illuminated doorway. Though not overbearing in stature, there was a certain degree of charisma and strength emanating from this unanticipated arrival.

Will began to answer, scrutinizing the credible fact that he'd had no previous warnings of a visitant, but was interrupted by an accumulating rhythm of drums in the back of his mind. The shadowed figure proceeded towards him, black particles rising from the floor in the hallway, no- not particles, feathers, feathers floating upwards without wind, twirling and flitting about within their reversed gravity. The man's mouth continued moving as he approached, lips soundlessly forming the same arrangement of words, ad nauseam, but even as the seconds stretched into minutes, Will could not place any exactness on the numerous possibilities of their formation. The cadence beating in time with his heart twisted abruptly into merciless noise, and Will felt a shuddering, a sudden convergence of helplessness, then superiority.

His upper body was leaning back, pressing into the office chair, his senses pulling instinctively from the threatening weight of fear churning in his gut, mouth gaping in wordless disarray, the pages he gripped fizzling upward into dust, and his hand felt completely, and strangely weightless.

His body jerked as if he had just lost balance, and his hand reacted instantaneously for his gun, instead smacking the alarm clock on the bedside table before the racket persisted further. He scrubbed the same hand down his face carelessly, breathing heavily and adjudging his sudden wonder of why he couldn't recall the contents of his dream. Will remained in place for a sparse moment, clinging onto his sense of reality one rung at a time, pulling himself as far above the surface as manageable.

His pounding heart and thoughts were evident enough that his dream had not been a good one.

All that remained was the simple phrase: *"I'm here for you."*

Will sat up, not quite drenched in sweat, and trudged heavily out of the bedroom door, rubbing the back of his neck, he began gathering himself together enough to begin the day. His dogs were following loyally at his heels, greeting him first thing with gentle licks on his hands and tails that wagged in appreciation of his existence. As he started up the coffee maker he couldn't ignore the joy of taking care of his pack, pausing several times throughout his first cup to ruffle behind their fuzzy ears or scratch an offered belly.

The morning rolled onwards in a way eerily pleasant as he tended to the pack's breakfast and his, the low temperature of the day a welcome chill to his usual heated state. When Will's phone rang, thankfully after the essential bouts with his dogs, he knew that sinking notion hadn't been for nothing. Glancing at the number, he was pleasantly surprised to see it wasn't a call from Jack. Alana Bloom's number shone up at him through the misting screen like a blessing from on high.

He answered, trying not to sound as relieved as he felt. "Good morning."

"Will." Alana's voice returned the greeting, stern yet fraught with indignation. "I'm glad you're already awake." She hesitated a moment, positive of his confusion without need of his facial expression. Confusion was replaced immediately by confirmation when she spoke again. "I wouldn't advise myself to bring this onto you, though..." The pause was enough explanation. "It's Jack. About Jack...he needs you here."

It had to have been incredibly serious if Alana had called in Jack's stead.

One or the other, Will swallowed a lump of knowing in his throat and corrected his earlier statement, huffing out a dismally resigned chuckle, his earlier statement recanted. "Morning."

"Yeah." Alana couldn't not agree with him, in tone and attitude. "Morning."

The possibility of any 'good' in this day had, now, all but diminished.

-+-+--+--+--+--+

The surrounding, peaceful neighborhood betrayed nothing outside of those who lived within, the clean concrete driveway matched a leveled lawn and a house painted a calming green. Though as time had waned on, the color had become weathered and pale, now closer resembling the torrents of horror that struggled within his being. A garden that had seen

better days rested beneath a window overseeing the front yard, and the entryway door, painted a variant of chocolate brown, creaked open as dirtied feet stomped on the entrance rug, it hung wide for a moment, shedding light on simple yet comfortable interior design, then closed with a resolute click, shutting out the rays of chilling morning sun. The events of the night were lost to him, and in his attempt to recall, simply guided him to the shower in a continued struggle to regain his bearings.

He started up the coffee machine after the hot shower, wrapped in his favorite white housecoat, and listened to the gurgling and bubbling as the instant mix brewed. The effect was calming to him. His normal world did not quake until he had seen the morning news.

The tiled kitchen floor had suffered the crash of the glass mug he was holding, scorching coffee spattering on his exposed feet. Fixing that second negative of the day, he threw on a decent set of clothing for the weather and pressed the pedal of his Ford truck to the floor, intent on arriving at the scene in a feasible time-frame, then grudgingly merging with the throngs of rattled onlookers who'd beaten his arrival.

His heart was in his throat before he had even viewed the aftermath in it's entirety. The perception of the scene had much more impact in person than in the dull summary of the morning news anchor.

The yellow tape encasing the area teemed with the movements of emergency workers, policemen and other necessary official agents. The mixture of chaos and tension seemed to beg for additional bodies on the pile.

Well, not bodies per se, just the heads. He shook off the morbid thoughts as best he could before advancing. His mental state was rocked even more than the dumbfounded 'sheep' people trailing all around him.

Lights were flashing in every warning color as he approached the barrier set up by local PD, darkened eyes scanned through the crowd of onlookers, absorbing the remarkable ranges of emotion and people. Repulsion, curiosity, recoiling bystanders, promotion hunting journalists...his brain tagged along the line beside him, his face a blank slate of thoughtless focus.

Even from this far placement, he could smell the burnt flesh, he could feel the heated sensations, hear the rumble in the air, the unmistakable, earth trembling sound of explosives, and see the mangled remains of human limbs scattered with the bursting force high into the air.

His mind played it on a reel behind his tightly closed eyelids, with clarity as though he'd been present for the blast. He tried not to shake, not to make his fear visible. Shivering fingers clenching and unclenching in his jacket pockets.

He knew the killer was amongst them, he knew, but could do nothing.

-+-+--+--+--+--+--

The first touches of winter were branching out without restriction, nature's cold fingers grasping mercilessly at all their icy tendrils could reach. Will had, stubbornly so, chosen to drive with the windows lowered the entire trip; the bustle and warmth of the townspeople making up for nature's lack of it. No radio though, if there was any news at this point it would not outmatch what Alana had summarized for him. Eying the road intently, his hands lightly twisted on the steering wheel as the world around him blurred by without remorse.

The familiarity of the drive was unsettling, not as though *deja-vu* was in action, and as he drove onwards on the long-familiar roads, the sinking feeling in his stomach gained another stone, pitilessly sinking deeper in his gut. Already he felt locked in the killer's game, a cord winding around his neck and urging him into a maze of influence and ill intentions. He found himself unable to tune out the present moment, thoughts locking him into a silent prison of acknowledgment, and with it, a drive that crawled on longer than usual. When the glaring lights were finally evident from a distance, flashing and visible through the tree line, a sigh escaped him of exasperation and realization.

Uniforms were silhouetted between the trees from his idling position, and Will recognized some of them as the bomb squad; with that observation, he parked a short ways from the scene, not surprised that he startled a guarding official as he walked up. Allowing his appropriate FBI badge to be properly scrutinized, he then began making his way to the core of the scene, with no more obstacles than his involuntary analogies.

Will's eyes wavered across the area, an odd scent about the air setting him on edge, alarms were already ringing cautionary bells inside his skull as he viewed the unusual overabundance of personnel, the bomb squad technicians especially, uncharacteristic for a crime scene with his name on the invitation, amid its reputable bedlam. Tents were set up about the area as well, now within the tree line, their unmistakable color caught his eye almost immediately.

Will continued to scan the scene, absorbing as many details as possible before fully approaching; his trailing gaze halted and settled when he spotted Alana close to an ambulance. The expression she wore was held tight, though meaningful worry was threaded within it.

His instincts behooved him that Jack would be in her vicinity.

Navigating that direction, Will was sure that some answers for his piling abundance of questions would be conferred to him. He maintained a dull sense of obligation as he approached the vehicle, disregarding the odd stares he received along with the chaotically charged atmosphere. The scent of smoke and burnt substances still clung to the air, and accompanied by the tension of authorized individuals hurrying about, Will found no cause to doubt his rising assumptions about what may have happened.

His opportunity to ask any question was derailed when Alana caught sight of him halfway to where she stood. He swallowed a knot in his throat and it only added to the bundling anxiety already forming within him. The look she wore sent evoked another wave of warning through him, so he inwardly opted for discretion. As she glanced inside the emergency vehicle for a split second, Will caught her mouth enunciate a few words, then she stepped from it and moved to meet Will's arrival. He tucked questions to the back of his mind, and their paths

connected a few steps apart, the seriousness of current events weighing heavily between them. Alana's eyes locked onto his and he cast his gaze downwards momentarily as she spoke up, her voice a trembling undertone.

“Jack says...it's not as bad as it should be.” She cast her face sideways for a second in clear disagreement with Jack's self diagnosis.

Will peered at the ambulance himself for a second, the noetic fog of anxiety finally reaching the peak of the day's first emerging headache.

“Should...depends more on the application of the word. I'd take the assessment of a *medical professional* first.” Will replied, concurring with her opinion and tone. Jack was a dependently strong man, obstinately so, whose willpower would likely outlive the both of them, in a positive complimentary sense.

“What about-” Will stopped himself, squinting his eyes at the first pangs of a headache. “Are you all right?” he finished.

Alana nodded and dropped her head, a smile lingering on the surface. “Much better now. Better than Jack.” She reminded, and looked back up at him, head atilt. “I'm probably keeping you too long, he does want to see you.” Her lips pursed a little as Will nodded grimly. He turned his attention to the ambulance and walked past her, steeling himself for whatever state Jack might be in. She watched him go by, then turned and followed him back to the open doors.

Will had been spared extra details on the phone, to undoubtedly urge a quicker arrival, and he wished blandly that the walls he'd prepared would hold.

“Sooner than I thought.” Jack said immediately upon seeing Will. The extent of his condition was visible with just a glimpse. Will's eyes flicked over Jack's condition in seconds.

There were thin streaks of blood across his shirt and tie, and the left sleeve of his coat had been torn away, by medics undoubtedly, for bandages that wrapped his arm, from forearm to shoulder. Beads of red were just beginning to peek through the bandages, a prominent contrast against the pure white wraps.

Will recalled the lingering scent of fire he'd noted upon arriving, and started to mentally draw mildly disturbing conclusions, forcing them down with another heavy swallow.

“Not as bad as it looks. Just scratches and bruises.” Jack cast a glance at Alana as if she hadn't relayed any information at all to Will. She simply set her jaw and remained silent, her genuine concern apparent.

Will wagered that that Jack's pain was presently numbed, and was probably the majority of the reason why he still talked so candidly. Any possible psychological damage had not likely hit yet. The medical attendant inside the ambulance was keeping a very steady eye on Jack's monitor, and Will, knowing Jack, was certain he had insisted on staying until his special investigator arrived, even though waiting posed more danger for him.

“This guy has a penchant for traps, Will. Sets the table, then puts a tripwire around the chairs for any unfortunate guest that decides to take a seat.” Jack inclined his gaze towards him, but Will refrained from any commented interruption. “There's other guys that caught the brunt of the blast...a lot worse than me. Specifically the 'guest' who found the menagerie.”

If Jack's tone had a significant spark of loathing, there would be no use provoking any unneeded response. Will knew that he'd probably hear the detailed whole of story eventually, willing or unwilling.

“Not unusual, being invited to a scene so...*laden* in creativity.” Will emphasized the final words with a slight dip of his head.

A bomb squad technician strode up next to them, his face a sour expression of obligation, his words mostly aimed at Jack. “The area is clear, we've got more to do, but you're free to move in.” He glanced offhandedly at Alana and Will, then moved away.

Jack half-scoffed at the remark and looked in the direction of the scene barricaded by police tape. “My three are waiting on you.” He leveled his gaze back at Will. “See what you can get.” He then turned towards the medic keeping a watchful eye on him and the monitors, who in turn said a word to the driver, and the other working medics began the final preparations for transport. He leaned back passively to gaze at the ceiling, the case still fresh and working in his thoughts.

The ambulance doors closed and Will watched the vehicle pull away from the site, red and white lights flashing in silence. Silence that festered until he'd passed by Price, Zeller and Katz, the yellow tape, and left himself situated in a place that was one of many possible locations the killer could have been standing, or as Jack had put it...sitting at the table. He had considered speaking to a bomb technician for extra information but refrained, the aspects of the scene would remain in their discernible state only so long. As dismal a revelation as that always tended to be. An insistent feeling prodded his conscious thought.

'I'm here for you.'

The quote from his dream echoed once again within his mind. His jaw worked as he breathed out, and the remaining words rattling about in his head finally began to trickle out as the jarred, familiar world began fading away. Allowing himself to be immersed in the terror of this killer's tale, Will let his eyes fall closed. The story that was an announcement into the world. The discovery of oneself through what was deemed their highest form of self-expression. Breathing out evenly as the pendulum swung, the reverted visions and scenery started their inevitable lapse into their previous forms.

Scattered before him were the killer's words, his meaning, and inside Will's mind the collected pieces began reassemble.

I intend to have six chapters. Please look forward to it, and thank you for reading!
(Updating again: 15/5/27)

Consilio Psidium

Chapter Summary

Will seeks alignment in the pieces provided by the killer's work.
Hannibal goes shopping.

Chapter 2: Consilio Psidium

Walking into the deadened clearing of fallen trees and crunching leaves seemed to unfasten a door in his mind that he had intentionally forgotten. Like an object pushed into the corner of an abandoned room, accumulating the dust and webs of every unheeded year. He mentally groped for a meaning, a semblance of words to explain the horrid work before him.

His stomach was twisting up.

He felt like he'd been here before.

He wanted to expel the sickness within him, to be free from the bonds of disgust, to scream out without consequence. He felt hopeless, hollow, and so very alone. Flinching at a shift in the cold wind a noise revealed a presence close to him. His yearning ceased as the sound he been hoping for finally emerged from his mental outcry.

“You're not alone.”

The presence of the voice was soothing, reverberating within him and stilling the clamour of his mind. He breathed deeply, out and in, out and back in, then stepped further into the circle of broken wildlife and piled body parts.

His handiwork commenced before his eyes as if he were the member of an audience, moving this branch here, twisting a wire there, wrapping it about the wrist of a severed arm, then spreading dirt and leaves over it to obscure it from view. The three severed heads were significant components of his portrait.

They were the centrepiece of his art, his...*design*.

He placed three heads, one at a time, upon the ageing stump, the meticulously sliced necks aiding their balance. The heads were supported further by leaning the occipital region against

the others, each one placed them facing outwards. The final arms and legs he had acquired were laid one over another, forming a ring around the stump.

The vision before him was a grotesque masterpiece. When he finished, he stepped back and regarded the scene with wonder, picturing the inevitable future of chaos. His work would now be the bullet forever embedded in the annals of history.

What is worse, after all, than a life without meaning? Cast aside and forgotten by the bitter dealings of society.

-+-+-+--+-+-+--

Will opened his eyes and exhaled sharply. The scene now made a pocketful of sense, -as much sense as can be understood within another's madness- now tied with some words, he had the foundation of a meaning. He could already easily attest to the fact that there were many pieces still missing.

No full story here.

Most of it had been blown away by the arrangements of trip-wire linked to the short-fuse explosives that had been activated. Perhaps that was deliberate, but was it regret that tied it together? Or was it purely hatred, biased and provoked into an inventive stage of coping?

The bodies that had formed the picture were the only intended executions, though the meagre power of the home assembled bombs almost seemed a rueful jest more than an actual intent for bystander murder. Of course, it was less of a joke to Jack and the other officer's that had been within their proximity.

He spoke to no-one as he stepped away from the scene, feeling a bit like he was drifting outside himself. Jack's team hopped to it with their own work, and Will knew he would be needing coffee. *A lot of coffee.* They all would.

He walked back to his car, and got back into the driver's seat, shutting the door fast enough to keep the grim feelings of the scene from slipping in with him. The car revved into start, the heat of the exhaust clouding in the chilled air, and Will pulled back onto the road; unaware that he wasn't even hearing the radio broadcast that was blathering out the local weather, proceeded by the horrific events of the morning. When Will faded back to reality, he had pulled into the academy lot.

Parking his car and pulling the key, he stared forward blankly for a moment as his surrounding reality dawned on him. It suddenly seemed absolutely inappropriate. He closed his eyes to block out the notion. The emotional remnants from the crime scene may have clung to him after all. His classroom didn't need that.

A sudden banging on the driver's window caused him to jolt in surprise.

“Will Graham?” The accent in the voice sounded forced, but the tone was passively quizzical. “Special Agent Will Graham right?” The pitch raised as he turned his head in acknowledgement, and animosity bubbled within him as his eyes settled on a likely very expensive Nikon camera hanging from the fellow's neck.

“No. Wrong guy.” he replied impertinently, and opened the door, swinging it just short of the camera wearer's retreating legs. Photographic devices were an immediate no for conversations begging for mutual agreement.

“Hey, hey! The parking spot has your name on it.” Prodded the man jokingly. “I mean, you did park there.”

Will had zero interest in lingering a second more than he had to. Grabbing the binder and papers he needed for the day's classes, he provided no answer to the continued gibes at his back as he headed towards the building.

“That was really something this morning huh? So much for a clear forecast.” The testy fellow prattled on. “The weatherman was wrong as usual huh? Rain of bloody chunks, and some cops to boot.” Continued the now *more than irritating* man as he remained several paces behind Will's back. “Talk about icing on the cake.”

Will halted his pace at the last sentences, turning towards the man slowly. He knew exactly what the camera wielding cur was looking for; some kind of squabble. While his hidden gun seemed tempting, he perished the thought before it became a serious consideration. His posturing seemed to speaking loudly enough for him anyhow, since the photographer had stopped in his tracks as well.

They held a short stare-off, Will eyeing his cheek more than the eyes, before the man had officially realized his methods were fruitless in the extended silence, and his gaze wavered to the papers and books under Will's arm. He edged a few steps forward, and Will bristled, watching a smile crawl across the man's face, not of malice, but one that had ruefully accepted the intended event held within the next unpredictable moment.

“Here's one for the books.” The photographer said in a toneless voice as he raised the camera to eye level and pressed the shutter key.

Resignation in a flash, then, an explosion.

Will's stomach jumped at the same time his legs reflexively propelled him backwards. His instinctual nerves had been shocked into action, enough to save him from any shrapnel, but the resulting force of the blast had still thrown him roughly to the ground, the papers and books in his hand scattering across the concrete. Alarms were sounding in slow motion moments after, and in the clangorous reel of time, he could almost feel every second of the world rotation. His ears were ringing and his body throbbed, the pain from slamming flat into the pavement catching up to him.

He heard a groaning, gasping sound, and lifted himself up with effort to ascertain the status of the attempted bomber's condition. The photographer's face, neck and chest were burned

badly, shards of the obliterated camera scattered all over his torso, a few bits were also stuck in the skin of his seared upper arms.

Will tried to ignore the singed smell as familiar flashing colours blurred in the corners of his vision. As his sight began fading to black, and medics rushed to their aide, that he realized his head had struck much harder than he had initially thought.

A bit amusing how much of the world could change, without some things ever admitting the difference.

-+-+-+-+-+-+-

The chill of the season settled upon Hannibal Lecter as he strode through the parking lot and entered the grocery store. An associate close to the entryway recognized him and nodded the morning's greetings his direction, accompanying it with a heartfelt smile. He returned the gesture with a polite smile of his own, and lifted a basket from several stacked by the door.

Stepping lightly down an aisle, *Rebel, Jean-Fery - Sonata For Violin & Continuo No 5 In D Major* resonated within his thoughts, the repetitive tunes of the store drowned out as he then became invested in the ingredients necessary for the evening's dinner.

He browsed the produce section for the most suitable selection, nearly able to tell which was best by sight and smell alone, before he lifted each particular item to his basket. Potatoes, mushrooms, celery, and several others that would be a choice fit for the palate. He purposefully took his time inspecting every one beforehand however, as his final ingredient was something that couldn't particularly be purchased. He levelled his gaze towards the meat counter as the attending manager walked into view from the back-room, the door swinging soundlessly behind him.

Colm Alecson was a dark-haired, large-set man, his fingers were a size which balanced equally with the rest of his being. His feet required custom bought shoes for a size that rarely met shelves, and his attitude was of the same degree. Kindness not a part of this man's persona. A solitary drop found no place to exist within him. Day in and day out, Colm's pent up anger was struck into the flitches of meat he prepared for sale. He considered his job to be the most important art for him, the customers he served deserving of only the most perfect of cuts. Often he corrected the way an associate was slicing, or appropriated their position, to save them from spilling their own blood in unpractised slicing, or worse.

The employees under his tutelage took complete advantage of his perfectionism. He'd often hear them snicker to each other about his habitual exactness when they thought they were out of his earshot. He knew better than to blame every one of them, youth mostly hails along immaturity and dissidence these days, he'd criticise. And there was always a ring leader.

Placing the carefully wrapped meats upon the shelf, Colm was eager to begin his day without hardship, when to his dismay a dark blue suit suddenly appeared several paces away,

lingering in his peripheral vision. The last thing he needed was a pompous businessman complaining about how he did his job. He stood up straight, using his intimidating size to his advantage and turned fully to meet the customer's attention. Colm's discontent was immediately struck with a sense of asininity.

“Dr. Lecter! Such a pleasure to see you again!” His voice boomed as his face beamed at this singular consumer's presence. The two associates who were scheduled to work with Colm for the morning peered through the window of the swinging door, utter disbelief etched visibly on their faces at his loud exclamation. Especially since it was irrevocably joyous one.

“How are you this fine day?” Colm continued. He couldn't help but appreciate another who saw and spoke about the preparation of food on as equal a level as he.

“No event that sanctions complaint.” Hannibal allowed a civil smile to surface, raising his head a bit at the height of the meat manager. Colm nodded, his eyes squinting at an answer he could concur with, and he rubbed his hands leisurely on his apron.

“What could I help you with this time?” Colm queried, shifting his gaze to aptly adjust several crooked packages in the bottom tier cooler. Hannibal used this segment of seconds to flick his eyes at the door where the two employees were present. His assumptions and senses were delightfully correct, the scent of smoke unmistakable on the one which his intentions sought. When Colm turned back to him, he politely met the gaze, then inclined his line of sight to the beef section, his mental recipes bubbling.

“Tonight seems fitting for beef I imagine.” Hannibal replied.

Colm's back straightened further in delight, motioning toward the counter. “I'll cut a fresh one for you- please! Right this way.” He would never pass up an opportunity to show off his skill.

~~~~~

Hannibal moved away from the meat section after acquiring the fresh cut of beef, his pace slowed on purpose as Colm called towards the associates still in back room. The employee's trudged out on the dot of the hour, their shifts simultaneously begun.

“Use the proper knives for the meat this time Tyler!” Colm warned. “Two weeks you've been here...no excuse for a lack of common sense.”

The meat manager's voice faded as Hannibal proceeded down the ethnic aisle. The teen's reply went unheard, but the preceding roar of Colm's irritation left no doubts of the insubordinate retort that may have been said. Hannibal perused the particulars that were presenting themselves so readily in these early hours.

The associate who'd greeted him as he had entered the store packed his items carefully into a paper bag, after a mannerly inquiry of how he was doing, and a casual conversation that trailed into the morning news.

The televisions above the checkout counters were flaring with the discord of recent events, and as Hannibal nodded a polite goodbye to the kind cashier, he watched one for a short

interval; paper bag of groceries cradled in one arm as he replaced the basket in the farthest stack from the door.

The newscaster's words were silent as captions flashed across the bottom of the screen, which very unsurprisingly lagged into the commercial break. They were nigh unneeded however, as in the background the FBI Academy stood with a definite unspoken symbolism. Hannibal's jaw worked somewhat as he considered several aspects of the apparent severity of the circumstances, then he made his way out the automatic doors.

The serenade of *Dmitri Shostakovich's "Tea for two"* drifted to the forefront of his mind. He need no longer question the happenings of Will Graham's first case out of Baltimore State Hospital.

# Maecenas et succendetur

## Chapter Summary

"Awaken and see what you have done. Marvel at a future devoid of repentance."

### Chapter 3: Maecenas et succendetur

The billowing silence was stifling. The echoing blackness of his dream inadvertently ushering in an unwelcome tremor within him. A thudding noise was fading in and out echoing in hollow chambers of his mind. It pounded in sync with his racing heartbeat. Rhythmically it increased in volume, until it was sharply audible with each burst.

Gunfire.

The muzzle flare of a handgun flashed behind his eyelids, and when the abyssal hole of the barrel was visible, levelled inches from his face, his eyes snapped open before the final round blasted from the chamber.

White lights shone in his eyes, leaving Will with faded floating specks in his vision as he blinked until they had faded. He knew where he was a few seconds later, and his pounding heart calmed as he absorbed his surroundings.

Johns Hopkin's Hospital, was in a way, a welcome sight in comparison to his dreams. He sat up slowly taking a careful account of his body's reaction to the movement. No pain. Maybe the pain killers were still in effect, or he wasn't in as bad a shape as he was expecting.

Not as bad as the journalist anyway. Closing his eyes, he rubbed his fingers down the bridge of his nose to perish the thought. His mental words continued to tick away. Or Jack for that matter.

Now he definitely couldn't sit still.

Will shifted, careful not to incite any possible pain, to make a phone-call for an available nurse, but froze when his eyes fell upon a note resting on the side table. A chill ran through him, not of fear though. It was an instinctual guarded warning.

He touched the corner of it gently, turning the paper's content more his way in an attempt to see who had addressed it. He breathed out in mild relief to see it was from Alana. A small surge of happiness bubbled within him at the reminder that there were still people that would go to such lengths for him. Even little things like this were meaningful by now. He picked up the note and read it to see how much of his curiosity would be abated.

*Tuesday. 8:13am.* The first noted segment of words jumped out at him, it had been two days since he'd last looked at the clock. The time stamped text also relayed that Alana had left ten minutes ago to call Jack and get some much needed food to eat. Will's stomach growled at that and he realized that he'd need sustenance as well. Hopefully that wouldn't be heavily dependent on the doctor's orders. His mood soured a bit at the thought, and he reached for the phone before any more unpleasant memories could fully surface. He'd call Alana first, then intended to check out as soon as possible.

There were things that required a high priority at present, and if he was lucky, not the he enjoyed counting on luck, the news wouldn't have fresh material on the case he hadn't yet been informed of.

-+-+--+--+--+--+--

*One night previous....*

Tyler Roule walked out the back door of the grocery store after a long shift, his fast stride the definition of freedom from the unwelcome events of his employment. The jump to his step was slowly being revitalized by the many years habitual cigarette he'd lit on the way out, and as he inhaled the soothing nicotine he mused the dealings of the day.

Tyler didn't even bother trying to comprehend why Colm was always trying to run him down. He chalked it up simply to the guy being bigger and more experienced than him. Used to being boss, and used to shouting orders. Not used to asking nicely or being nice.

He breathed out a stream of smoke, letting his musings escape with the drifting cloud in the night air. Another day another dollar. He recited inwardly in disgust, then was pulled from his train of thought when he noticed the glass of the driver's window on his car was smashed out. The uniform coats he had hanging in both back window hooks were untouched. There was no visible occupant from the rear window either.

He took no chances.

Tyler pulled a knife from his back pants pocket and dropped his cigarette on the ground in the same motion. Carefully stepping around the back of the vehicle, he peered through the open window frame as best he could. The still settling cold of the evening made the fogged glass

near impossible to see through, and he clenched his teeth as he swung the driver's door open with his empty hand.

Nothing. No clamouring of an intruder, only the sound of more glass shards clinking onto the pavement. He heaved a sigh of relief and leaned into the vehicle to further assess the damage, muttering about insurance on the vehicle.

Tyler's eyes immediately fell upon the contents of his glove compartment scattered onto the passenger seat and floor space. God knew he'd had some pretty expensive, albeit illegal, stuff in there he'd been saving for an extra buck, what were the odds of someone knowing his car had stowed treasure. Before he could flip the switch of frustration, a voice in the back seat drew his attention.

“Here.”

Tyler's head jerked that direction, and he instantly made eye contact with the back seat dweller. Before his nerves could kick into gear, the intruder had a hand on the back of his neck, rendering him immobile, and a hold on his knife wielding fist. Before he could utter a curse or struggle away, his own knife was plunged into his throat and he was pulled across the seat and into the vehicle. The last thing Tyler's eyes registered was the embroidered name tag on his secondary white service shirt, as the shadowy killer leaned over him, watching his final moments drip free.

~~~~~

Colm stepped outside the back door, happy one moment that the day's sales had gone so well, and the next, brooding with displeasure at the slow learning associates assigned to him. He locked up the exit door and turned towards the lot as Tyler's Ford navigated out towards the road.

“That guy...” Colm muttered. “No desire to learn....no respect for superiors...” He pocketed the keys and made his way to his car. “Whose idea was it to hire him anyway? Older chap like him is better off on the other side if he can't contribute at least that.”

Colm re-evaluated what his thoughts had just spelled out and stared guiltily at his car keys while he unlocked the door. With that in mind, he drove from the lot and headed home, home is where the heart is after all. “Yeah. Maybe tomorrow I ought to cut him a little break...”

-+-+-+--+-+-+-

A dull blue '80s Chevrolet truck thundered down the dimly lit street, dousing it's lights as it pulled off the road and into the thick woods alongside it. As it rumbled into a well shrouded place and parked out of sight, the owner sat numbly at the wheel, breathing out cold smoke as the seconds ticked by. “

We're here.” A voice reminded him, and he stepped from the truck to start his newest work, his newest memories.

He was at two acts now. Three was what he wanted. Three marvels to be gazed upon. Three. A magic number. The childish song bobbed and warbled audibly in the back of his head as he walked around the truck bed to gather his appropriate supplies. His work was more valuable to him than the tedious repetitions of daily life.

The moonlight was shining perfectly this evening, permeating through the treetops above and highlighting the land before him, ready to accept his newest creation. He counted the area with his footsteps, taking a wider circle around the open patch of ground. It had taken him several months to acquire the proper information for each zone that would suit his masterpieces. Each segment of his work was planned accordingly.

His tool box was ready, his hands ever eager to begin more of his work, his mode of expression, his voice. Methods the public could never understand.

“We're reaching for someone on a higher level than those among the common rabble.” he mumbled as he set his toolbox on the ground, and knelt beside it, reaching to sift his fingers into the soil. Sirens wailed in the distance, and he flinched, a sudden surge of guilt weighing heavily on him as suddenly as the sound that pierced the still night.

He knew what he had done, what he would be remembered for.

“It'll be fine- it'll be fine...” He chanted, clutching his arms as the cold seeped into him. He held himself still and tried to remain steady, not breathing until the wailing sirens faded. He shook his head to re-order his train of thought. His eyes screening across the ground in a regain of confidence.

“Nothing to worry about.” He muttered, and pulled a set of wires from his toolbox to begin stringing them across the ground. “I'm not alone.” The body parts waiting in the bed of his truck would dictate that difference, especially when the news discovered his best creation yet.

-+-+--+--+--+--+--

Present day...

The chilling daylight was encouraged onward by the wind that rustled through the trees and brushed against the light coloured bricks of a familiar building. The building that housed the office of Dr. Hannibal Lecter M.D.

Hannibal was casually readying his office to welcome in the next patient of the day, one he'd been keeping an investigative eye on since Will had made a -suffice to say- timely check in at Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane.

Gilbert Raleigh was an unusual character when held next to what most considered normal. Not altogether different in appearance so much as he was in his mannerisms. His oral

communication and body language wavered frequently when he spoke, and in other instances he would drop into complete silence, for what he seemed to not notice, minutes at a time. This did not dissuade Hannibal's curiosity however, the ever-changing freshness of Gilbert's personality was one small positive amongst many neutrals he found himself frequently attending with.

Hannibal didn't weigh his patients by differences or risk factors. The deciding measure was how worthy of his time they were, if they piqued his interest, not the opposite. There were open roads with Gilbert he could pave, just as he had managed with Will. Though regrettably, the lack of response from this patient at times was hardly beneficial to his methodology.

Gilbert would be arriving a tad late to his appointment. Hannibal knew this from a session the week before, when Gilbert mentioned that such might happen, and he had made a mental and literal note. When he heard the door outside his office open and close, he knew exactly who it was.

Hannibal walked calmly towards the waiting room door, and opened it the same style he always did, a deliberate sway and a polite greeting to the arrival. But the familiar smell carried with it was unsuspected. *Blood*.

Gilbert looked up and nodded respectfully in return, Hannibal already noting that his appearance was ghostly compared to their past sessions, and that he carried the day's newspaper absently under his arm. He always brought something with him to exhibit, though not usually in physical form.

"Please, come in." He stepped aside and Gilbert entered the office at a slightly stuttered pace, rubbing his hands together from the cold and apparent nervousness. Hannibal closed the door and faced Gilbert with a calmness that matched the patient's increasing anxiety.

"Mr. Raleigh, you seem a bit distant this morning." Hannibal folded his hands in front of him and let his words settle for Gilbert's reply before he made another prod at the shivering man's wavering countenance. Gilbert responded with a sharp nod of his head, and turned slowly his direction, unfolding the newspaper as he did.

"Dr. Lecter, we...." His voice trailed off as he reoriented his words. "I think I've let something horrible happen." Gilbert pulled the newspaper from under his arm and opened it to a marked page, holding it towards Hannibal's line of sight; Gilbert kept his eyes pointedly downward the entire time. Hannibal tilted his gaze towards it after a second and scanned the paper composedly. It was the article depicting the explosive murder case, although heavily lacking in detail.

Hannibal had not bothered to even feign surprise at the convenience of an articulate murder literally exploding onto the television screens the day before Gilbert was due for another session. Whether Gilbert had realized it or not, he had been verbally stating his intentions in an irregular pattern during their sessions, several weeks beforehand. Hannibal had considered that Gilbert might have some inkling to the fact, but this was a much better way to lay out the groundwork of details.

When Hannibal made no worrisome reaction, Gilbert almost dropped into a panic, had Hannibal not made eye contact with him again a second before.

“If this truly was you, and you believe that informing an authority is paramount, then feel free to do so.” His voice intercepted Gilbert’s rising panic, and stilled it before a storm was evoked. He continued when Gilbert visibly relaxed. “However, there has been no indication that the proprietor of these events has been identified.”

Hannibal was not entertaining a falsely invented claim, he knew precisely the effect his words would have on his patient. The case that ever-accompanied this patient had revealed itself a month ago. Surfacing with sudden outspoken claims of premeditated violence that appeared now in the papers.

Gilbert lowered the paper, grip tightening and crinkling it in his hand. A completely different look glazed the man's eyes.

“Dr. Lecter. Am I late?” Gilbert's voice was low again, and his appearance seemed refreshed as he gazed around the office until he settled his empty expression on his psychiatrist.

“Only marginally.” Hannibal extended a hand towards the chairs. “Please. Take a seat.”

~~~~~

After Gilbert took his leave, Hannibal studied the news updates on his tablet. Newspapers never truly gave the same impact of a crime scene. They were simple photographs, stills of chaos now locked in time. Being in the presence of such havoc was truly the most impressionable method, genuine and unfettered by text driven points.

Hannibal began considering a more reliable, more in-depth source for information. It had been long enough after all, paying a visit to Will might just be the leeway the investigator needed, considering that last he had seen him, they were separated by steel bars. Will uninhibited by a cage was a risk he could look forward to.

# Trahens in terra

## Chapter Summary

A flashback of Baltimore, and a new look at present events.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

### Chapter 4: Trahens in terra

#### Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane

“ Will Graham.” The tactful voice began. “I did desire an interview from you, but not particularly in this fashion.”

Frederick Chilton. Administrator of Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. His notebook and pen hovered over the page, in a semblance of habit and scrutiny. He was seated comfortably outside the bars, observing Will's every move.

Will maintained a blank expression, a toneless canvas; the silence levelled between them until Chilton continued, revising his tone.

“ Mr. Graham. I do hope you'll understand that we could share a mutual trust, a mutual interest, in your...situation. We needn't make any part of this difficult, or judgemental.” He paused for effect, pen tapping against his knee as a formation of questions swirled in his mind. “Let's begin then shall we?”

Will folded his hands, but remained seated on the bed. His mind a flurry of phrases and visions of accusation. His eyes were switching from one to another while he stared straight forward, as Chilton leaned towards the bars from his seat, the first question driving into the clear.

“ What do you believe,” He emphasized the next word, hunting for a reaction. “Influenced you the most in your choice of work?” There was a glint in Chilton's eye that couldn't be ignored. A two-faced, heady start to an impetuous conversation.

“ Saving lives.” Will had no reason to lie, or play this game under the deceptions he now found himself wedged between. Always locked between parallel lines of another’s resolve.

Chilton eyed him scrupulously. The response had been completely lacking in hesitation, but Chilton appeared to have seen something else amid the words, and he scribbled something on the paper. Turning his attention back to Will, he donned a minuscule smile.

“ The victim's states of being point antithetically.” The expression on his face grew to a purposeful smirk as Will tilted his head up in acknowledgement of the words.

“ The dead are more than capable of speaking for themselves.” Will's face was a pall of stone emotion. “In other words, misinterpretation is as frequent as man's inescapable curiosity.”

Chilton's mouth turned down at that, and he consulted his page again thoughtfully, he made a short jot with his pen before glancing back at Will. It was clear enough that Will knew how to play the tune, as much as Chilton knew how to dance to it.

The administrator’s eyes were slits for a moment, “Mr. Graham,” crossing his legs, as he continued a second after. “I think, we'll end up learning quite a bit about each other during these sessions.”

The forefront of the sentence was a clear stab at his being a teacher. The latter reminded Will sorely of someone else.

-+--+--+--+--+--

*Present day...*

Hannibal sat comfortably at his desk, tablet in hand, having switched from local news to articles posted on the notorious tattlecrime.com. Freddie Lounds' voice was emanating with a stratagem queried behind every note of text. Several past articles were of Will while he had been in the Baltimore State Hospital, and those he had read with open interest. Now just recently there was another. While this hospital was prestigious, it was not one to which he would suggest placement, unless absolutely necessary. The title of the article was as inductive as the content.

### **Criminal versus Crime :**

*“ Will Graham, recently released from Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane, has already landed at a new hospital. Though different in nature to the previous, he was instated in John's Hopkins after an event of explosive proportions greeted him outside the FBI Academy. During a recent investigation of the crime's of the notorious 'Body Bomber', a possible sympathizer approached Will Graham outside the building- ”*

Hannibal ceased reading further than that, after all, tales could be better enjoyed when read from a proper perspective- in person. What he needed first, was an excuse, or better said, a reason to visit the empathetic investigator. He tidied up his office, work completed for the day, pulled his coat over his shoulders, and leisurely made his way out of his office building.

A new take on the challenges ahead had his mental cogs whirring at full speed, as he pulled on a pair of gloves to avert the cold that met him outside the door.

Hannibal strolled down the sidewalk towards his Bentley, but his pace came to a halt when he noticed another familiar vehicle outside, and the person leaning on it all the same. Adding a hint of surprise to his tone for emphasis, he voiced his observation to the one clearly awaiting him. "Jack."

Whether the extent of his injuries were still impairing him in any way, was not apparent from how Jack was calmly posturing.

"Dr. Lecter." Jack greeted, speaking in the same authoritative timbre as usual. "Mind joining me for business?"

Hannibal had expected something in that measure, and if it wasn't weighed in higher importance, Jack wouldn't have made the visit personally. His curiosities were simmering.

"I hope you will not mind if I drive my own vehicle." Hannibal returned, as he cast a glance away for a moment, noting how alone Jack looked, and peripherally watching the short laugh to cross Jack's face; the cold puffs of air allowed his chuckle at the stated question to be mildly visible.

"Of course not, Doctor. I wouldn't want to deprive you of that." A more serious look crossed Jack's features as he continued. "Either way, we end up in the same place."

Hannibal donned a resolute expression and stepped around the fence, navigating towards his car. The hum of Jack's engine timed in his senses, and he followed suit, driving according to Jack's navigation. The location they arrived at was hardly a surprise, and when they finally rumbled to a stop in the parking lot, it appeared that fate, if it could be said, worked in a way befitting amusement.

-+-+-+--+-+-+--

Will Graham walked briskly down the halls of the forensics division. There hadn't been as much of a hassle checking out of the hospital as he had pessimistically expected. Ironically, much more tedium had latched onto him in the drive here. Pricks of pain and ideals from the crime scenes were already settling, refreshed in his memory by the inevitable future and violent events that had plagued him already. He felt like he was walking with his eyes closed, and when he opened them from his daze, he was standing by Jack's team of skilled workers, Brian Zeller, Jimmy Price, and an approaching Beverly Katz.

"Welcome back!" Jimmy Price exclaimed with a deliberate touch of the over-dramatic. "Always good to have one less dead guy around."

Brian Zeller perked at that, and scoffed a reply. "Good? The dead have far less to worry about."

Beverly shook her head stifling any inappropriate beguilement, files in hand. "Glad to see you up and about Will." Her own input involved raising the information she held to eye level.

Almost as if he had a choice on the matter. The illusion of such held an aspect of comfort.

Will took the folder with an appreciative nod, and flipping open the pages he was hailed by a mentally ear piercing sensation that sparked up the back of his neck. The events that he had been missing while unconscious for two days became horrifically apparent.

Words of the killer were, again, dancing behind his eyes with each image, the spellings of each perspective glistening into a solution of explanation and characterization. Here he also learned that the paparazzi who had met him in the Academy parking lot had passed on in yesterday's early hours, succumbing to the wounds inflicted by the obliterated camera. His jaw visibly tightened at the thought, and as he inspected the further pages he noted another particular of information.

“ The DNA results show five different bodies...what's the story on the I.D.'s?” Will inquired.

Beverly piped up first. “There’s no connection between the victims. Family or otherwise. Seems this guy is on a warpath of whimsy.”

“ If the desired effect was in just creating the spectacle, there'd be no point in being choosy.” Brian commented, earning a slanted gaze from Jimmy and a contradiction.

“ An artist wouldn't go to work with a random palette, an idea -or better- vision, is what makes the impact of the piece successful.” The two were silent a moment, but the flames of an argument were starting to ignite.

Will spoke up before further debate ensued, “Where's Jack in all this?” The place seemed ominously empty without the power behind the team present.

“ Just in time, from the looks of it.” Jack walked in with a stride that implied he was on a mission. The group turned their gazes his way in an almost synced respect. He tucked a hand into his pocket and eyed the group in solemn return.

Will swallowed in minute resignation of what the news might be, and started to turn back to the files in his hand blankly, until his gaze trailed upon the second individual that fell in behind Jack's shoulder; his world paused completely for just that instant.

The look shared between Hannibal and Will held meaning the other's had not yet been made privy to. Will's expression darkened, as he broke the second of eye contact, and mentally he wanted to burst into attack, or walk out. But more important reasons held his feet in place. For now at least. He adjusted his glasses and turned away from Hannibal's scrutinized gaze.

“ Mind if I see the cameraman's body?” He queried at the team, there was a second of suspension, then they moved into action. The body was rolled out in chilly revelation as they examined again, the after-effects of the detonated camera.

The group changed positions about the room while Will analysed the corpse. Brian and Jimmy were on the other side of the body tray, Beverly hovered around the foot of the body, and Jack watched the scene placidly over Hannibal's shoulder, who was standing a few paces behind Will's back.

“ It is comforting to see the attack on you did not involve fatal injuries.” Hannibal spoke in quiet solely to Will, his head inclined in observation of Will's façade, and the body before him. The deliberately familiar friendliness in Hannibal's tone nearly provoked his blanketed anger to the surface. Will cast a secondary glance that way, directed at the words, jaw set in silence, then oriented his thoughts back to the body on the tray.

“ Simple in a way,” Brian spoke up, using his pointer finger to designate points of the injuries. “Gunpowder residue around the wounds. A bit old fashioned, but the initial effect he wanted was, obviously, successful.”

“ I wouldn't call that a success.” Jimmy gibed under his breath, Brian ignored it with a slant of his lip.

“ Walter Grenville.” Beverly spoke again. “He wasn't a local, so when calls came back we found out he's from Roanoke.”

Will squinted his eyes at the new intake of information. “Four hours away.” He mused out loud. Though it wasn't unremarkable that premeditated acts went to such trouble, he couldn't see or feel any more significance from Walter's supine form, other than being the tool of a higher realm of madness.

“ That's also where we're going.” Jack interceded into his thoughts. Will gave a small start of surprise at the fact. “We've got more news to deal with than what's in your hand.” His face was hardened as he informed them of the newest addition to the line of this killer's crimes. He caught Will throw a glance at Hannibal, and made clear the other man's reason of presence.

“ You're not going to be making this journey alone Will. If *anything arises*, you're to let one of use know.” Jack flexed his left hand a bit, and Will wondered if there had been a stab of pain in Jack, both mentally and physically.

Will didn't intend to let himself boil down again, but neither would he let himself be guided on a path set by someone else. Nodding in affirmation, he turned back to the body again as Jack spoke up once more. “We'll be going on the hour. Be ready.”

“ I will be.” Returned Will with a knife-like sharpness to his tone. Jack nodded, and Hannibal supposed that the knife edge in Will's voice was aimed at him, and the blunt side was aimed at Jack. What an interesting dance this was going to be.

As Will made to follow Jack out, Hannibal in step, Beverly poked the intentionally lagging Will in a hushed tone. “Don't lose your head.” A bad pun at the case, and the story that was attached to Roanoke's infamous name.

Jimmy overheard and huffed in annoyance, “Horrible.” Though his tone seemed to imply he'd found it somewhat amusing.

“ Seriously, though. Be careful, all-right?” She had a look that was a combination of worry and sincerity. When Will nodded, she returned it with a partial grin as the body was appropriately rolled back into the storage refrigerator, the door closing with a suctioned pop. Will then walked out after Jack, whose quick pace already had him at the end of the hall,

leaving Hannibal instead, waiting for him almost exactly outside the entryway door. Will clenched his teeth in unspoken vexation, and continued walking forward.

“ Jack has insisted you ride with me.” Hannibal kept his stride even with Will’s, attached like a second shadow. “He has just received an urgent call that will have him a few miles away from Roanoke.”

The looming feeling in Will's gut re-emerged as they made it to the end of the hallway. “The scene relies on your capable hands, Will.”

The strike at his countenance caused him to slightly bite back. “More than just my hands are capable now, Dr. Lecter.” Will did not intend to allow circumstances to unroll between them as before. It couldn't be allowed.

As they neared the exit of the FBI headquarters, the established level of tolerance carried them to Hannibal's Bentley Arnage. Hannibal had sensed Will’s underlying meaning well enough, and ruminated on the possibilities that were opening in their relations. He unlocked the passenger door first, Will’s analytical gaze affixed on his back, and positioned himself near enough that Will brushed by him getting into the vehicle. A glance at the investigator proved that the move had not gone unnoticed when their eyes locked for a second.

Hannibal masked his expression, navigated around the rear of the Bentley and settled into the driver’s seat, turning the key as they started the four-hour trip to Roanoke. “ *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*” by Handel, in low volume ceremony, began playing as they drove from the lot. Will accounted the second of many deliberations sifting in the atmosphere, and decided, if it was possible, to attempt rest while he still could.

## Chapter End Notes

Cannabis assisted me with this chapter. I hope the improvements are noticeable. Many thanks bro!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!